

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
for
March 16, 2006
MEETING NO. 3-06**

APPLICATION: COURTESY REVIEW

HDC2006-00347

ADDRESS: 25 – 33 Wood Lane

ACCEPTED: February 7, 2006

45 DAY LIMIT: On hold

OWNER: John duFief

REQUEST: Remove all existing wood windows and replace with Anderson thermally-glazed vinyl-clad wood windows.

STAFF: Robin D. Ziek



STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the applicant withdraw this application and undertake normal maintenance work at the property.

Staff also recommends:

- 1) Applicant apply for a Certificate of Approval for the installation of storm windows at the property to upgrade energy efficiency of the existing wood windows.
- 2) Applicant either remove the vinyl porch railings and replace with the approved wood railings; or, apply for a Certificate of Approval for the installation of vinyl porch railings.

BACKGROUND:

Previous Requests:

1974: N. Adams Street abandoned for 197' north of Wood Lane, and added to Lot 1 Bl 19.

1977: Construction of law offices on Lot 1, Block 19, Original town of Rockville

1995: Approved to replace masonite siding with cedar.

Property Area: 1.085 acres (47,280')

Structure Area: 14,741 s.f.

Zone: O-2 Zone

Zone Standards and requirements

The purpose of the O-2 Zone is to provide office space for private, quasi-public and public uses, to stabilize residential neighborhoods near commercial and office uses by establishing a transition between such uses and nearby residential uses, and to promote the preservation of existing residential structures. To these ends, uses are limited to a low concentration of activity and a building scale characteristic of the adjoining residential zones.

City of Rockville Permits Required: HDC Certificate of Approval

BACKGROUND

Historic, archeological, or architectural value and significance of the site or structure and its relationship to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the surrounding area.

- ☐ **Contributing**
- ☒ **Non-Contributing**

Significance: The Adams Law Center is located within the West Montgomery Historic District. This historic district is also listed in the National Register. The Adams Law Center was reviewed and approved as new construction by the Historic District Commission in 1977. The buildings are recorded in city records, however, as having been constructed in 1985. As is aptly stated in the purpose of the O-2 zone, the property was designed as compatible new construction within a larger historic district. The proposal succeeded in providing substantial commercial space while modeling its massing and materials on the historic residential structures to avoid an incongruous intrusion into the historic district. The buildings achieved its sense of compatibility largely through stylistic replication and incorporation of typical historic building scale, materials, and detailing (i.e., mortar joints, wood trim, and window design).

Background History: The applicant is concerned with maintenance requirements at the property. For example, several wood railings deteriorated after about 15 years, and he replaced them with vinyl railings (without a Certificate of Approval). In the 21 years since the buildings were constructed, he has had to repaint the windows and trim multiple times. In addition, he is concerned with the lack of energy efficiency of the single-paned windows, as opposed to the new thermally-glazed windows now readily available.

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT:

The relationship of the exterior architectural features of the structure to the remainder of the entire structure and to the surrounding area.

The windows are an element in a prior HDC approval for compatible new construction within an established historic district. Staff reviewed the original application and, while not very descriptive, the applicant applied for wood windows and wood trim (HD –25-77), and this was approved. The windows are compatible with those in the historic district in shape, size, and diversity. The windows include 2/2 with wider muntins, than the 6/6 with narrow muntins with higher bars for a deeper shadow line.

Staff notes that the existing windows appear to be in good, operating condition. There is some peeling paint on some of the windows, and on some of the sills.



MATERIALS:

The general compatibility of exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used.

The proposed material is generally not considered consistent within the historic district, especially on those elevations readily visible from the public right-of-way. The vinyl cladding is considered desirable in terms of removing maintenance requirements for periodic repainting. When the windows fail (in 20 years or so), they will be thrown out and replaced with new windows. The applicant therefore is under a different maintenance cycle: removal and replacement of all the windows at a large expense at a longer period of time, as opposed to a re-painting and caulking cycle, which involves a smaller expenditure at more frequent intervals.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

To any other factors, including aesthetic factors, which the Commission deems to be pertinent, including items such as cost, tax credits, options, and alternative plans.

The new proposed windows do not exactly replicate the older, single pane windows. While new materials may be approved for additions that are typically placed behind or to the rear of historic buildings, it is not recommended to replace historic materials in the primary structure with new substitute materials. In addition, replacement is always recommended as a second choice after repair and maintenance. This also helps preserve HDC decisions, such as went into the review and approval of this project in 1977, when it was deemed compatible new construction.

COMPLIANCE WITH GUIDELINES:

Staff finds that the proposed alterations do not meet the *Secretary of Interior Standards #9*, which states: “new work shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.” In this case, the consideration is the integrity of the historic district with respect to compatible new construction.

Staff also finds that the proposed alterations do not meet the City of Rockville’s *Technical Guide for Exterior Alteration # 3*, which states: “The replacement of doors and windows is often proposed because of condition or poor functioning. However, peeling paint, broken glass, stuck sashes and high air infiltration are no indication that the windows are beyond their useful lives. These concerns can be addressed through repair and repainting, and replacement is *not* recommended.”